Where Do You Stand?

An Appeal to Americans of German Origin

By Hermann Hagedorn

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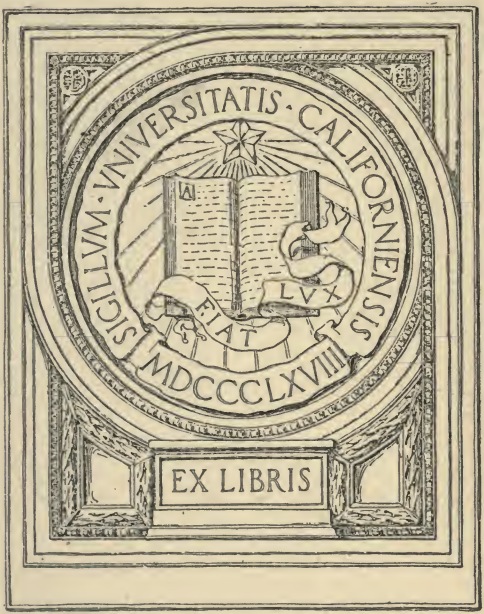
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WHERE DO YOU STAND?

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TORONTO

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

AN APPEAL TO AMERICANS OF GERMAN ORIGIN

BY

HERMANN HAGEDORN

"Come, let us reason together."

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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1918

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TO

THE MEMORY OF MY GRANDFATHER

FRIEDRICH SCHWEDLER

A SAXON BY BIRTH, AN EXILE BY CHOICE, A STAUNCH AND SUCCESSFUL DEFENDER OF AMERICAN IDEALS BY THE GRACE OF HIS OWN HIGH SPIRIT

He fled from Saxony after the revolution of 1848 and 1849, leaving a thriving business and a congenial circle of fellow-musicians to find in America the freedom which his own country denied him. As editor and proprietor of the "New Yorker Demokrat" (now the "New Yorker Herold") he vigorously fought, in New York through his daily, in the Middle West through his weekly, for the election of Lincoln in 1860. Lincoln, stopping in New York on his way to his first inauguration, sent for him and thanked him for his successful efforts in winning to his candidacy the support of German-Americans. To the day of his death, Friedrich Schwedler carried in his face like a consecration the memory of the thanks of Abraham Lincoln.

For his valiant defence of the Union whose language he never mastered but whose ideals he

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loved and served with single-minded devotion, he deserves to be remembered by his countrymen.

His grandchildren who knew him not as a defender of a great cause but as a dear, slender old gentleman with snow-white hair and a ruddy skin and faded, childlike blue eyes—a snuff-box in his waistcoat and a red silk handkerchief trailing somewhere behind—will always remember him gratefully as their most welcome playmate. The "Kuss Walzer" and "Als ich noch im Flügelkleide" and certain bits of Chopin today retain for them a magic of their own which he, thirty or more years ago, first evoked from the keys.

In the midst of a great battle, fellow American and fellow fighter, your old playmate salutes you!

H. H.

Sunnytop Farm, Fairfield, Connecticut,
on Friedrich Schwedler's hundredth birthday,
January 25, 1918.

FATHERLAND

(Winter 1914–1915)

There is no sword in my hand
  Where I watch oversea.
Father's land, mother's land,
  What will you say of me
Who am blood of your German blood,
  Through and through,
Yet would not, if I could
  Slaughter for you?
What will you say of one
  Who has no heart
Even to cheer you on?
  No heavens part,
No guiding God appears
  To *my* strained eyes.
Athwart the fog of fears
  And hates and lies,
I see no goal; I mark
  No ringing message flying;
Only a brawl in the dark
  And death and the groans of the dying.

FATHERLAND

I love you, German land,
Your hills, your fields,
Where cornflower and poppy stand
Amid the golden yields.
I love your forests; deep,
And full of half-heard wonders
Are they. The witches keep
Their revels still to the thunder's
Rolling music; and still
Fairies run amid leaves
Through the beeches and up the hill
Where the ruined castle grieves
For the dear, departed throngs,
While up from the vale
Come the palpitant, clear songs
Of cuckoo and nightingale.

I love your rivers. The Rhine
For the sake of dear, lost hours
Lives in this heart of mine.
In its ancient towers
Roland and Charlemagne
And the plumed hosts
From Askelon and Spain
Were more than tedious ghosts
Clanking through musty pages,
For in these halls awoke

FATHERLAND

The dead and ashen ages,
  And lived and glowed and spoke.

I love your towns that dream
  Through the long warm day,
Where the brown and laggard stream
  Takes his well-ordered way
Silently, lest he rouse,
  Bewildered, aghast,
The placid burghers that drowze
  In the quiet lap of the past.
I love your market-places
  Where the *Rathaus* clock looks down
On the weathered peasant faces
  And the ladies of the town,
Bonnetted and mildly splendid,
  Haggling, with hot argument,
As though all the world depended
  On the penny saved or spent.
(I can hear the chatter now
  And see the queer, round hat
And dowdy gown of the *Frau*
  Oberregierungsrat;
And smell the odors, drifting
  Warmly among the stalls,
And see the colors shifting
  Against the Square's grey walls.)

FATHERLAND

I love the streets that slumber
Silent and full of the past.
Ghosts without number
Are there; and outlast
The living that come and go
With their day of laughter and pain;
For ever the great names glow
On the walls and the ghosts remain.

I love your songs; to me
They are of the kin of fire
And wind and sea
And all things that aspire
Sunward and starward; glad
As boyhood love in Spring;
Tender as mother-pity, sad
As men remembering
June, amid falling leaves.
Others have made high songs
Of love and summer eves
And swords and thongs.
But your songs were not made.
Out of the heart's deep pang
As out of the scabbard the blade
Shining and sharp they sprang.
I love your dreamers
That climb and ask not wings—

FATHERLAND

Patient and plodding schemers
Of intricate, infinite things;
Your scholars, who labor and fall
Unseen, unregarded,
To fit one stone in the wall
Of the temple, and die, rewarded
If the stone shake not in the gale.
Truly, they stand in the ranks
Of heroes who died for the Grail
And asked of nc man thanks.

For you, your men of dreams
And your strong men of deeds
Crumble and die with screams
And under hoofs like weeds,
Are trampled; for you
In city and on hill
Voices you knew
And needed, are still;
And roundabout
Harbor and shoal
The lights of your soul
Go out.
To what end, O fatherland?
I see your legions sweep
Like waves up the grey strand.
I hear your women weep.

And the sound is as the groaning
  Swish of the ebbing wave—
A nation's pitiful moaning
  Beside an open grave.
Ah, fatherland, not all
  Who love you most,
Armed to conquer or fall
  March with your mighty host.
Some there are yet, as I,
  Who stand apart
  And with aching heart
Ponder the Whither and Why
Of the tragic story,
  Crying with bated breath:
Spirit I knew, can this be glory?
  Spirit belovéd, this is death!

The Author is indebted to the Editor of Poetry for permission to reprint these lines which in part appeared originally in that magazine.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

AN APPEAL TO AMERICANS OF GERMAN ORIGIN

I

WHERE do you stand?

North and South, East and West, in every part of the country, that question is today being addressed to us, Americans of German origin. In words; or if not in words, in glances; in hand-shakes less friendly than they used to be; in countless ways, that question is being put to us, morning, noon and night: *Where do you stand?*

A few have by their actions answered that they stand first and last with Germany, and they have been put under lock and key.

A greater number have declared unmistakably that they stand with America against Germany; and they have been greeted by their countrymen as Americans who have been put to a bitter test and have not been found wanting.

But the majority, the large majority, have not answered at all. In the face of that question, they have grumbled, hotly declaring their indignation that any one should dare for an instant to doubt their absolute loyalty to the United States. "I deny any one the right to ask me where I stand," they cry. "I am an American citizen. I have always been a conscientious citizen. As such I naturally support my government. To question my Americanism is an insult that I will not tolerate."

They are absolutely sincere when they say that; and yet, may one not wonder whether they are quite awake to the gravity of their own situation or the peril of their country when they thus reject, as an affront, the simple

request of their fellow-citizens that in this great crisis they declare themselves clearly and unmistakably?

"Why should we German-Americans alone be called upon to give evidence of our complete loyalty?" they cry. "It is not patriotism that prompts our neighbors to ask us were we stand. It is hatred, it is intolerance, it is the spirit of the Inquisition! We should be weak to bow to it. Not we are the ones who are faithless to the ideals of the Republic. Those who raise the race issue, those who cast distrust upon us, not because we have shown ourselves deserving of distrust, but because we happen to have German names and German blood and German words on our lips—they are the ones who are faithless, they are the ones who are today splitting open our country. Do not come to us with your long faces, lamenting about a divided people. Go to them! Show *them* the error of their ways and you will have the united nation you want. You will never achieve it by persecut-

ing a body of citizens, of proved integrity and conscientiousness, merely because they are not of British origin. Never in this world!"

Thus, or in similar words, these Americans of German blood answer the question: *Where do you stand?* Because they are naturally grieved at heart that the country of their adoption should be warring with the country of their origin, because possibly they are themselves convinced of their own complete loyalty to the United States, they are sensitive. They know that they have been excellent citizens in the past, that men of their race fought to build the Union and that others fought to preserve it, and that hundreds of thousands more have, year by year, in the city, the state and the nation stood with their ballots as bulwarks against public corruption. They are proud of their record—they have a right to be proud—and their pride has been hurt.

And yet—is there not another side to the matter?

We are engaged in a great war.

This war involves not two nations only, but the whole world. It is not a war for the correction of a boundary, the possession of a colony, the monopoly of any trade route. The war is costing each of the nations involved more in mere money in a week than any trade monopoly could yield them profits in a year, or any colony in ten years or any readjusted boundary in a hundred. This is not a war for dollars on either side. No men fight for dollars the way the armies are fighting in France and Flanders. They fight thus only for religion or a principle.

The principle for which Germany is fighting is the principle of government by centralized, monarchical control and supervision. The principle for which America and the Allies are fighting is the principle of government by popular control.

This is not the place to endeavor to prove which principle is right and which principle is wrong. The essential point is that in a war of principles

such as this, in a war of conflicting political religions, the belligerents are divided not altogether by boundary lines but to a great extent by the personal convictions of individuals. A German like Liebknecht who is willing to go to prison because he thinks the principle for which Germany is fighting is wrong, is, in this War, not on the side of Germany but on the side of America and the Allies. A citizen of the United States, on the other hand, who believes that the principle for which Germany is fighting is right and the principle for which America and the Allies are fighting is wrong, is, in this War, not on the side of America but on the side of Germany, and it is inessential whether his origin be German, French, English or Choctaw.

The question is not: *Where do you come from?* but *What are your convictions?* In a war merely between nations there may be intelligent individuals in all the nations involved who may be neutral; but not in a war of

conflicting principles. There are no neutrals in this war.

Where do you stand? The question has been put to nations and to men again and again since that tragic day in 1914 when the Great War began. Turkey and Bulgaria answered it in one way; Serbia and Belgium answered it in another. Here in our own country, men began even in the first month of the War to ask themselves the same question, and to ask it of their neighbors, knowing even then that this War involved issues so fundamental that no ties of friendship could long withstand a difference of conviction there.

The same question, *Where do you stand?* was put to the government and the people of the United States. Not only the Allies, not only pro-Ally leaders in America, but, in a sense, even Germany herself put the question to us in every protesting word she spoke concerning America's dealings in loans and munitions with the Allies. "*He*

who is not for us is against us. Where do you stand?"

On April 2nd, 1917, the President gave his answer.

To the President, to public officials, public leaders and private citizens of whatever origin all over the country, the question has been squarely put, *"Where do you stand?"* and the majority of them have squarely answered: *"I stand with and for the United States and against Germany."*

Why should we Americans of German origin be treated with more tender consideration than the President or than citizens of other origin?

II

THERE is no reason. There is, on the other hand, every reason why the question should be put to us.

Before America's entrance into the War, the majority of Americans of German blood were frankly pro-German. The public utterances of their leaders, the resolutions adopted by their societies, the editorials in the German language newspapers, religious as well as secular, were all pro-German and bitterly opposed to any action in opposition to what the Government considered not unjustly, to be Germany's infringement of America's rights. That portion of the American people which is not of German blood conceived, whether rightly or wrongly, the idea that German-Americans regarded as right and just everything which Ger-

many did or demanded; and regarded as utterly iniquitous any action which America might take in opposition to those deeds or in contravention of those demands. No German-American leader, no German-American society or newspaper, ever publicly voiced any sincere indignation against the sinking of the *Lusitania,* which stands today and will always stand as the symbol of Germany's aggression against America's rights and America's honor. The Americans who were not pro-German drew the conclusion—mistaken, I believe—that Americans of German blood as a body approved and applauded that act.

America is now at war if not solely at least incidentally in consequence of the destruction without warning of the *Lusitania* and other ships.

The German-Americans for various reasons tacitly or openly approved of those sinkings.

Can we, Americans of German blood, absolutely loyal as we may be, wonder that other Americans should,

with a worried look, ask us, "*Say, old man, where do you stand?*"

To ask that question, not with rancor in the heart or fire in the eye but in all friendliness, is not a slur on any man's Americanism. It is not persecution. It is not an evidence of anti-German hysteria. It is plain common sense based on the established record of German-American opinion during the two and a half years preceding America's entrance into the War. During those years, we Americans of German origin permitted the rest of the American people to gather the impression that we were all, without exception and without reserve, ardently and wholeheartedly for Germany and all its works.

Can we blame them if they look upon us today in the light of that impression and say, "*In March you were for the Kaiser and you made no bones about it. Today, where do you stand?*"

Such a question cannot be dismissed with an indignant rebuke and a look of

wounded pride and the general protest that an American of German origin is as good a patriot as any other American. Nor can it be satisfactorily evaded by the declaration on the part of the man questioned that he does not recognize the hyphen but considers himself an American and nothing but an American and therefore refuses to answer questions based on the assumption that he is a German-American. We are dealing here not with the names of things but with the things themselves. A man of recent German origin may rightly choose not to call himself a German-American. But that choice does not alter the fact that his origin is German. It does not alter the fact that a great many other people of the same origin have for several years, in season and out of season, publicly and privately, expressed their unmodified approval of all Germany's words, deeds, methods and ambitions. He may call himself a red Indian or a pink carnation, but the fact remains that he is a man of German blood to

whom other Americans have a right in this crisis to say, *"Neighbor, this is a difficult business for you, isn't it? I'm sorry as the devil for you. But—so there won't be any misunderstanding—tell me exactly, where do you stand?"*

German-Americans have been asked that question again and again, and the majority have, in the face of it, clung to a half scornful, half indignant silence.

The average American of other blood than German is by nature quick in jumping at conclusions, a little too quick. Under the lash of war he is inclined to be even quicker. Because an American with a German name and a German cast of features refuses persistently to declare himself *for* America and *against* Germany, this average American has a tendency to stamp on his hat and cry, "This man is a damned traitor!"

That assumption is in nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out

of ten thousand absurd. Americans of German origin, with the exception of a dastardly few, are absolutely loyal to the government of the United States. They consider themselves Americans and nothing but Americans. Some of them take pride in believing that they are the only true Americans remaining. All others, they declare, have yielded themselves, body and soul, to England.

To them, America's entrance into the War is, in a sense, a soul's tragedy. To them, America is merely the dupe of England, bound to her inveterate enemy by links of gold forged by American financiers and munition-makers. America, they bitterly complain, has again become a British colony.

"You ask where do we stand?" they cry. "Are we not giving our sons to the army and navy, our hard-earned money to the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., the Liberty Loans? What more do you want of us? Do you expect us to shout with enthusiasm for a war

into which we believe America should never have entered? We are doing our share. We are doing more than many Americans whose forefathers came over in the *Mayflower*. Let America accept that and be satisfied and not ask us to stand in the streets reviling the country of our fathers."

There are hundreds of thousands of Americans of German origin who hold that attitude. They are loyal, and they give what they are able to give to attest their loyalty, but their heart is not in their gifts. They are aggrieved, they are embittered with the bitterness of the man who feels, rightly or wrongly, that he has not been given a "square deal."

III

WHEREIN does the American of German origin believe that he has been unjustly treated?

Here, in brief, are his grievances:

He believes that from the very beginning of the Great War, the attitude of the American government was unneutral favoring the Allies, especially England, and discriminating cruelly against Germany. He claims that in the face of British aggression our government was weak, while in the face of Germany's most moderate demands, it was relentless and hard. It protested vociferously, for instance, against Germany's proclamation of a war zone about the British Isles, though it had remained silent when England several months previously had issued a similar proclamation concerning the North Sea. It insisted on hampering

the activities of Germany's submarines, he claims, but accepted meekly all of England's Orders in Council in regard to contraband, the blockade and the blacklisting of American business houses. English mines, he contends, sank as many American ships without warning as German submarines. But instead of protesting, the American government surrendered its soul into the hands of the British Foreign Office and obediently declared war against Germany.

There, briefly, are the German-American's grievances against the American government. Some of them are fantastic, some have a measure of truth behind them; all of them are sincere and deeply felt. None of them is to be lightly thrown aside by other Americans, as inconsequential. No belief, however mistaken, is inconsequential when it is fervently held and passionately defended by thousands or hundreds of thousands of intelligent individuals.

But these are not all of the griev-

ances which have temporarily embittered the American of German origin. He has grievances not only against the American government but also against the American people, especially the leaders in journalism, business and finance who, he contends, persisted in the most unneutral fashion in discriminating in favor of England and against Germany. He believes, for instance, that the most important newspapers in the country were at the opening of the War bought with cold cash by England and that American editors surrendered themselves, body and brain, to the dictation of the British Foreign Office. He contends that news favorable to Germany was suppressed and news unfavorable to her cause or her reputation either invented or richly colored. The whole story of German atrocities, he believes, is a legend created by mendacious British correspondents, and sent forth over neutral countries under the lustre of Lord Bryce's honored name in order to persuade neutral opinion that the

hitherto gentle and peace-loving German had suddenly become a raving barbarian.

There is no arguing this conviction with the German-American; and this is not the place to cite indisputable evidence of eye-witnesses. Whether our sympathies have in the past been with the cause of the Allies or the cause of Germany, we Americans of German origin cannot allow ourselves to revive issues which as far as our present duty is concerned are dead and buried and must not be disinterred. At this time it is important only to cite them in order to set before other Americans the grievances which a large majority of German-Americans held and in part still hold against their government and their fellow-citizens.

The German-American believes that the majority of American newspapers wilfully misrepresented Germany's aims and political philosophy, her history, her form of government, the attitude of her rulers toward the common people, her methods of warfare;

inciting America to hatred of Germany and all things German by flaunting in misleading headlines the statements of German extremists and exaggerating beyond all reason the influence of certain rabid militarists like Bernhardi and Treitschke who, he declares, were without influence in Germany. He insists that air raids over defenceless towns were initiated not by Germany but by France in an attack on the city of Nuremberg during the first days of August 1914; and not even the evidence of Nuremberg newspapers to the contrary will in this matter convince him of his error.

The German-American contends, furthermore, that American bankers committed a series of unneutral acts, in contravention of international law, in loaning large sums of money to the Allies during the years before America entered the War. He contends, beyond this, that the traffic with the Allies in arms and ammunition was not only inhuman but unneutral; that America, while professing neutrality and friend-

ship for Germany, was actually doing her utmost to help defeat Germany. He believes absolutely that without this assistance from the United States, the Allies would have been defeated in 1915.

Here again are questions which the march of events have relegated to the limbo of dead issues. There is no use today in discussing them, in pointing out that Germany herself has always insisted on trafficking in munitions at all times and with all countries; that an American embargo would have created a precedent which might at some later date have worked to our own disaster; that Germany herself floated a loan in the United States early in the war and that German language newspapers advised their readers to invest in it. We Americans of German origin are seeking here not to accuse any of our fellow citizens of German or other blood, of unreason, of lack of logic. War is not a matter of reason; it is a matter of emotion. No man and no nation can fight because

cold logic tells them they should. They fight because in certain cases something higher than reason or in other cases something lower than reason tells them that they must. War has a tendency to cloud logic always, because it inevitably inflames the emotions, and in war as in love, the heart has a way of playing ducks and drakes with the intellect.

To ask strict logic of the German-American is to ask more than the American of other than German blood has been able at all times to show. It is not important today to prove or disprove the ability of the German-American under stress of terrifying events to reason clearly. It is, on the other hand, tremendously important, in order that his fellow citizens of other origins may understand him better than they do, to record his emotions.

The German-American believes that he has not been given a "square deal." Government, the newspapers, finance, big business, have all, he contends, discriminated wantonly and most un-

justly against the country to which in time of her peril his natural affections turned. This hostility toward Germany as a nation, fed by unjust vilification, extended itself, he contends, long before America entered the War, to hostility to all things German in the United States. Though he may not be able to produce tangible proofs, he believes firmly that, fostered by British propaganda, there has in the United States long been under way a deliberate persecution of Germans and Germanism, aimed to crush out what he considers the liberalizing influences of Teutonic ideas with "the muckerdom of English puritanism." He considers the recent attacks on the German language newspapers and on the teaching of German in the schools as a part of this cold-blooded and narrow-minded campaign; a malicious and unpatriotic endeavor on the part of its promoters to take advantage of the anti-German passions engendered by the War to annihilate the rights and influence of the most solid and most

loyal element in the American people.

Germany and the German-Americans have, in the eyes of the American of German origin of whom we speak, had a "raw deal."

What answer have the great body of Americans, who think otherwise, to give him?

IV

THIS is no time, we repeat, for any American citizen of whatever birth or blood to attempt to justify or refute grievances which had their origin in issues which today are as dead as Babylon and Heliopolis. These things belong to the past, to those "mute, inglorious" years whose memory we trust the grand sweep of this present time to cover with charitable wings.

The American government and that majority of the American people which is of other than Teutonic origin, in those years, the German-American believes, committed grievous errors, acts of bitter injustice, sins of omission and commission which he finds it difficult to forgive. We have recorded what he believes those errors and those acts to have been.

They belong to yesterday. May they rest in peace.

It is now only fair, however, before we consign these also to the grave, that we record the grievances which Americans of other stock than German held and to some extent still hold against the German-Americans. Whether these grievances are justified or not, a statement of them may to some extent make clear to German-Americans the reason why the rest of the American people now go to them, asking, *Where do you stand?*

At the very beginning of the Great War, a week before the first gun was fired by whatever nation did fire it, which is immaterial here, the sense of fair play of the American people was roused by Austria's ultimatum to Serbia. The American people were, as a whole, ignorant of Balkan issues. They knew nothing of the rights and wrongs of Austria in Serbia. They saw a great Power threatening a weak people and, rightly or wrongly, irrespective of whatever the underlying

facts may have been, their sympathies were aroused for the under-dog. When, ten days later, Germany delivered what seemed to Americans a brutal ultimatum of her own to another weak people, and like Serbia, Belgium, wisely or unwisely, rose up with a shout to repel the invader, the great mass of the American people jumped with their usual speed to the conclusion that the Teutonic Powers were blackguards and bullies, and France, England, Belgium, Serbia and even imperial Russia were saintly defenders of the oppressed. Whether this conclusion was or was not, in the light of later events, justified is not the point at issue. The point is that in the very first week of the War, a certain firm conviction took hold of a great number of Americans, especially leaders of opinion. Rightly or wrongly, these Americans became convinced thus at the very outset that the Allies were defending their hearths and homes against a modern species of Robber Baron. Statements of Ger-

many's intellectual leaders convinced them, furthermore, that this War was not a sudden, reckless, unreasoning excursion, but the sober result of a political philosophy which was as far removed as A is from Z from the political philosophy on which American institutions stand. Gradually, they came to believe that the success of Germany in this War would almost automatically involve the downfall of the democratic ideal. Believing this, they began to preach the crusade against the German idea. They preached loud and they preached long. Meanwhile, German statesmanship seemed to justify their preachments. The submarine campaign brought almost daily evidence to prove their seemingly most reckless statements concerning the "German menace." They preached successfully. We are embarked on the crusade.

Whether these Americans were right or whether they were wrong in believing that Germany threatened the very soul of America, that thing they

did believe. Germany's point of view and the methods with which German leaders sought to enforce it seemed to them barbaric and subversive of all the laboriously created traditions of humanity and civilization.

Burning with this conviction, they could not understand how any man who had lived in America and breathed the clear air of democratic institutions and ideals, could, for an instant, defend Germany or regard with anything except horror the possibility of a German victory.

The majority of the German-Americans, meanwhile, seeing the War from a different angle and believing, not unnaturally, the German version of the War's origin and its conduct by the different nations party to it, enthusiastically supported Germany and all its works.

This is the first grievance of the average American against the American of German blood, that he, a free citizen of the Republic, should have identified himself as wholeheart-

edly as he did with the cause of a government based on principles fundamentally opposed to those on which the United States were founded. The German-American, he complains, accepted Germany's aims, methods, pretensions, self-justifications and self-glorifications without critical examination, at Germany's own valuation. In a sense he was more pro-German than the Chancellor himself, for the Chancellor had admitted that in invading Belgium Germany had done a great wrong; but this the German-American never would admit. He had nothing but praise for Germany's leaders; nothing but praise for every deed they did and every word that came out of their mouths. Their official bulletins and notes, of which in the course of time the United States received their share, he regarded as rather more trustworthy than the Gospel.

The average American resented the unquestioning allegiance which during the first years of the War the Ger-

man-American appeared to be showing to the Kaiser and all that the Kaiser typified. He began to resent it more intensely when the clash of Germany's "military necessity" and America's rights as a nation brought the two countries sharply face to face, and the German-American in consequent arguments almost invariably took the German side.

Examined at a distance, in the cooler mood of the historian dissecting the corpse of a dead issue, the average American, whose mental attitude we are here attempting to make clear to his fellow-citizen of German origin, might today admit that his resentment against his fervently pro-German neighbor did not fully take into account human nature or give full credit to the German-American for the exhibition of certain lovable, American qualities which largely determined this average American's own attitude toward the War, and which, in himself, he considered rather praiseworthy.

The German-American, it appears,

also has a keen sense of fair play. The German-American also has a natural tenderness for the under-dog. The American of English or French stock, with his eyes on the situation in Europe, saw Belgium, Serbia and France as the oppressed nations; the German-American, with his eyes mainly on the situation in the United States, considered Germany as the poor, abused brother. Both were intolerant; both, as a rule, were supplied only scantily with a knowledge of actual conditions in any of the warring countries, with a background of history or with a firm grasp of the fundamental issues; both, in the heat and exigency of debate, presented the situation in extreme black and white with no shading. England was the devil with hoofs and a spiked tail, or Germany was the devil, similarly adorned. Neither gave consideration to the possibility that though one side might be predominantly right, the other side need not therefore be altogether satanically wrong. There was warrant

enough in history to withhold from either set of belligerents the immediate award of harp, halo and wings.

The German-American resented bitterly the sanctification of all things pertaining to the Allies; he resented especially what seemed to him a very orgy of anglomania. The American of different origin, on the other hand, resented quite as bitterly the German-American's assumption that Germany was more or less the perfect nation, mentally, morally, politically, philosophically and culturally. He resented such actual outbursts as this made in 1916: "I tell you, Germany is the one nation whose hands at the end of this War will be seen to be absolutely, spotlessly clean! I tell you, Germany today stands so high in exalted, moral eminence, that no other nation on earth is fit to be named in the same breath with her—" and so forth and so on.

The average American, whose point of view we are here attempting to lay bare, resented what seemed to him the

German-American's extreme partisanship from the very beginning of the Great War; he resented it with increasing bitterness when Germany began not only to interfere with American rights and destroy American property but also, rather more ruthlessly than seemed necessary, began to take American lives. The German-American's contention that England had been the first and was still the most flagrant offender against international maritime law and the neutrality of the United States passed over his head and left about as much impression there as a flock of swallows flying south. Law or no law, the average American felt instinctively and rightly that though stealing—granting the German-American's contention that it *was* stealing—may be reprehensible, it is not to be compared as a crime, with murder. Locked in a room with a man who wanted his life and another man who wanted only his property, it was natural common sense for the average American with whom we are dealing to

whisper to the latter, "Here's my pocket-book. If you think you need it to deal properly with that dangerous fellow over there, all right and bless you. I'll send you a bill—and don't you forget it—but I won't send it until you're through fighting. Meanwhile, I'd be obliged if you'd kindly stand between me and that fellow's gun."

It was a mistake, perhaps, that Americans who believed that the Allies were right and that Germany was wrong, spoke as though America were really neutral. On the part of the government, perhaps, it was a necessary diplomatic fiction. For, of course, America was not neutral, for her neutrality was, especially toward England, of that benevolent variety which only the eye of an expert can tell from frank partisanship. The German-American damned America's attitude as hypocritical; the American of other leanings accepted it as, for the moment, inevitable and as reasonably just.

The diplomatic conflict between

Germany and the United States, meanwhile, became more and more acute and the opinion among American citizens on both sides became increasingly violent. The average American resented and resents today the fact that in every fresh dispute the German-American took Germany's side, accepted as indisputable Germany's arguments, and treated with scorn, derision and anger the words and the actions of America's official and unofficial leaders in defence of American rights and American lives. He resented with growing mistrust the attitude of German language newspapers all over the country which poured over the heads of the President of the United States and all others who spoke openly and hotly concerning what seemed to them wanton and inhuman aggression, the vials of bitterest contempt and denunciation; and which, at the same time, had no word of censure for Germany or any of its leaders except those who, like Liebknecht, represented in Germany the democratic point of view.

For those Germans and for those only it had denunciation or ridicule.

Is the American of other blood than German altogether to be blamed if, remembering those things, he asks the German-American today, *Where do you stand?*

V

SURELY, he has a right to ask it, for during the past three years, the German-Americans of position and influence who represent the unquestionably loyal majority of Americans of German origin, have been silent, driven from public life to the obscurity and protection of their firesides by what seemed to them the intolerance of Americans who were of other blood than theirs, leaving the leadership of German-Americans to editors and others whose sympathies were undisguisedly and above all with Germany.

Among these were American citizens of German blood or birth who, as editors of German language newspapers, saw in the War a heaven-sent opportunity to restore the dwindling prestige, circulation and advertising of their newspapers; and certain other editors

of newspapers and periodicals printed in English who, for dollars or notoriety or both, played on the prejudices of the German-Americans. In the same class were politicians who hungered for that elusive and undeliverable quantity, the "German vote"; a few small but in certain German social circles influential folk who had been dined and wined by the Kaiser; a very much larger group who had business interests in Germany which would suffer in case of a German defeat; and a vast number of good but unimaginative parsons, school-teachers and others who failed to comprehend the meaning of the lives of men like Carl Schurz and Abraham Jakobi in 1848 and Liebknecht and Nicolay in 1917, which is, that a man may love German hills and woods and rivers and castles and fairies, German women and German song, and still be able and willing to oppose with heart and brain and hand a system of which the Kaiser is the glittering symbol.

Those men were, with a few excep-

tions, good people, loyal to the best they knew, but they were not good leaders. They were will-o'-the-wisps beckoning their fellows into perilous marshes.

There were other leaders, clear-eyed, fully conscious whither they were leading, responsible; but responsible neither to the American government, the American people nor to a conscience nurtured on American ideals. They were German citizens, enjoying the hospitality of the United States, employés in part of the German government, German professors, responsible only to the government which employed them and to a conscience, seeing rights and wrongs from the angle of a Prussian Ministry of Education.

There were still other leaders, responsible, and by reason of their position doubly obligated to steer the opinions and emotions of their fellow-Americans of German origin wisely and carefully among the rocks and shoals that lay about them; not to in-

fluence their passions but to call upon their reason; to consider not Germany and Germany's rights and wrongs so much as America's difficult international position and their own place in a land which, however unjust it might for the moment appear to the cause which was naturally close to their hearts, had, after all, hospitably received them and given them a freedom of one sort or another which they had not found in the land they had left. These leaders were the official heads of the thousands of German-American social, literary and athletic clubs scattered over the country, and of the National German-American Alliance, an organization with branches in almost every State, whose avowed purpose is the extension in the United States of German culture and the German language. These leaders have unquestionable power and they exercised it by means of addresses at frequent conventions and mass meetings and by other public statements, which could not help having their effect on

thousands and hundreds of thousands of German-Americans who were disturbed and puzzled to know exactly where they belonged.

These hundreds of thousands were no different from the majority of their fellow citizens of other stock than German insofar as they had never been taught to think deeply on political problems and knew next to nothing of international affairs. They wanted some one to tell them what attitude they, as German-Americans, must in good conscience take in reference to the War in Europe and to the relations between Germany and the United States. They wanted leadership.

And they got it.

It is the most obvious of platitudes that when the wise men of a nation choose to cling to the seclusion and peace of their own hearthstones, the government is run by knaves or fools. This is not the place to make subtle discriminations concerning the character, the ability and the vision of the men who took it upon themselves

to tell Americans of German origin that their future prestige and happiness depended on a German victory. They were demagogues, German-American "leaders" by profession, who had been so busy evolving schemes and ever new schemes for building up German influence in the United States (which meant incidentally their own personal influence) that they had never really acquainted themselves with those ideals of life and government which make up the American conception of democracy. Those men are not to be blamed. They led, it is only fair to believe, as their individual consciences dictated.

The men who are really to be blamed, the men who are really culpable of the grave misunderstanding which exists today between the American of German origin and his fellow-citizen of other stock, are those men of German blood and wide reputation who have in the past, in countless ways, in our civic and national life, shown their ability as leaders, but who in

this crisis played the sullen Achilles, sulking in their tents because they considered themselves ill-used. They are men of education, in part they are men of learning, in part they are men of high social position, men without question whose words would carry weight if they cared to speak them.

But they did not care to speak. Not one of them raised his voice against the pompous drivel of the German-American Alliance orators. These cultivated gentlemen of German origin who protested loudly that they were Americans and nothing but Americans, spoke no word to refute the statement of the president of the Alliance, "We have long suffered the preachment that you Germans must allow yourselves to be assimilated, 'you must merge in the American people'; but no one will ever find us prepared to descend to an inferior culture. No! We have made it our aim to elevate the others to our level." That piece of pernicious buncombe passed unchallenged by the German-Ameri-

cans of intelligence and influence. If they realized at all its inevitably dangerous effect on the average American they did not bother to combat it. Parlor politicians, parlor strategists, parlor Germans and parlor Americans, they preferred to stay home and grumble at everything and everybody except the Kaiser.

That does not mean that they are or that they were actually disloyal to the United States. But it does mean that they were, and in part still are, emasculated arm-chair kickers, smug as eunuchs in a harem in their aloofness to the passions of men; uninspired and uninspiring neutrals, who love America a little but not enough to use the influence they possess to help her, and who love Germany a little, but not enough to give them a certain feeling of responsibility for their fellow citizens of German origin.

And there we come to the crux of the matter of German-American leadership in this country. The men of education, ability and position among

Americans of German origin constitute to a large extent a self-conscious and exclusive caste, a social Four Hundred, which has no more use for Hans, Fritz, Ludwig and Heinrich, who meet at their *Skatclubs* and bowling alleys, than any other snob has for any other "social inferior." They have their own luxurious clubs and they would no more think of taking part in the activities of the societies to which Heinrich belongs than a Fifth Avenue dandy would think of joining actively in the work of his district political organization.

"Where do you stand?" asks the American of other than German origin.

"You have no business to ask me that," responds this German-American. "I am an American citizen. It is an insult to question my loyalty," and so forth and so on.

"But," persists the other, "the German-American Alliance and similar organizations, professing to speak with authority for the Americans of German blood in the United States, have in the

past three years issued statements so violently pro-German that the question is really a perfectly natural and legitimate one to ask."

"The German-American Alliance!" exclaims the first in derision. "You don't think I'd have anything to do with that aggregation of singers and turners and ten-pin experts? You forget. I am not a German-American. I am not hyphenated in any way. I am an American and nothing but an American."

That protestation is in itself, as far as it goes, admirable. But it does not go very far. In its attitude toward America it is about as convincing as any other piece of stump eloquence; in its attitude toward the German blood which flows in our veins, whether we like it or not (and some of us do like it and still dare to be proud of it), it is about as loyal as the disciple who cried with an oath, "I do not know the man." Indeed, the men who make it, while, in their unwillingness to criticize anything pertaining to Germany,

pretending to be loyal to their German origin, are actually disloyal to it inasmuch as they refuse to use the influence which that very origin may at this time give them with their fellow citizens of like origin.

The hyphen is not in itself a disgrace. In its ordinary significance it means only that our fathers, instead of coming to America in the *Mayflower* in Sixteen Twenty came in the *Bremen* or the *Borussia* in the Eighteen Fifties or the *Werra* or the *Lahn* in the Eighteen Nineties. The hyphen is a disgrace only when it signifies divided allegiance. For a certain type of German-American vociferously to deny his origin blinks the fact that German blood is German blood. It blinks the further fact that the speaker thus vigorously denying his German-Americanism is probably himself a member of a German club of one exclusive sort or another. It blinks still further the fact that, whether we like it or not, a good many hundreds of thousands of Americans, who freely

admit their German origin, have organized themselves into countless singing societies and other social, athletic and literary clubs having a wide influence; and it leaves these hundreds of thousands to the tender mercies of any ambitious and clever demagogue who takes it into his head to lead them astray.

In recording the grievances which the American of other than German stock has held and in part still holds against his German-American fellow citizens, it is highly important to consider the consequence on public opinion in America of the inept leadership which was all that the snobbish or sullen indifference of the men who might have led wisely allowed the German-Americans to have.

For two years before America declared war on Germany, there was, we well remember, a long epistolary battle between President Wilson and the German Foreign Office. The average American was intensely interested,

during that period, in what the American of German origin thought of the whole business. He recognized that the German-American had no easy choice to make. He recognized, furthermore, that on the choice the German-American did make might rest the future unity of the Republic. He naturally hoped that, whatever might be the exact attitude which the German-American would take, it would be an attitude based on conclusions freshly and discriminatingly reasoned from premises as strictly American as the inevitable intrusion of certain natural sentiments would permit.

But the "leaders" of the German-Americans in newspaper offices and on executive committees were, thanks to the indifference of the peeved Achilleses, on the whole not of the calibre carefully to examine and judge on its own merits each new act, demand or justification of the German government. Under ordinary circumstances it is difficult enough calmly to sift evidence against your own flesh and blood

or to weigh with cool discrimination the defence of a brother, supposed to be a self-respecting moral citizen and now charged of a sudden with every crime on the calendar beginning with murder and ending with God knows what. Surrounded and harassed as they felt by what appeared to them unjust and brutal denunciation of Germany and all things German, these "leaders" seem to have surrendered their prerogative of individual judgment, then and there, and decided to eat—neck, feet and feathers—every bird the German government cared to set before them.

In so surrendering their right and their duty of judicial criticism, these so-called "leaders" lost utterly their opportunity to temper the growing indignation of Americans toward Germany. They overplayed their game at the very beginning. They whistled Germany's tune to the last sharp and the last flat. They consequently became not a force but merely an echo; an echo of a voice, moreover, which

the average American found extremely discordant. When, therefore, they cried for an embargo on arms or against the sailing of Americans on English ships, insisting that only American needs and only American ideals underlay their demands, Americans of other stock merely shrugged their shoulders and said, "This is damn hypocrisy! They want it because Germany wants it. They can go plumb to the devil!"

From first to last, the men who set themselves up as leaders and moulders of opinion among German-Americans were indistinguishable in their arguments from similar leaders in Germany itself. The great body of Americans of German origin, anxious to be shown where amid the confusion of many tongues lay the truth and their own highest duty, accepted the statements of their leaders with a naïve docility for which we who are of German blood are not unjustly said to be famous; and became to all intents and purposes individual phonograph rec-

ords, giving out here, there and everywhere the siren-music of the German Foreign Office.

From Maine to California, from Oregon to Texas, from Porto Rico to the Philippines, we have made that music heard.

Is it to be wondered that today men are asking of us, *Where do you stand?*

VI

IT is unfortunate, beyond words, that the emotional rather than intellectual leadership which in this crisis guided the destinies of German-Americans, should have held constantly before the rank and file the wrongs and the desires of Germany rather than the rights and the needs of the United States. The German-American was led not only to conceive a high admiration for Germany, but at the same time a sharp contempt for the country of which he was a citizen. The American of other origin, meanwhile, made up his mind that a man who appeared to love Germany so much and America so little, was open to suspicion of disloyalty.

He found in the course of time certain evidence which seemed to confirm his suspicions.

The German-Americans, he found, while expressing through their leaders the hottest indignation at every infringement of what they conceived to be Germany's rights, by America and the Allies, were so far from indignant at the infringement of America's rights by Germany as actually to demand the abject cession of those rights. He found, furthermore, that the German-Americans, while exulting in the "martial spirit" of their mother country, were preaching the most trusting and guileless pacifism in this. He found that they regarded with contempt any suggestion of a reorganization of the German government which might end in the overthrow of the German "stand-patters," the Junkers; even while they were fomenting class hatred in this country and in countless ways saying and suggesting that capitalism was the root of America's anti-Germanism. He found that German diplomats or secret agents, caught red-handed in some characteristic enterprise, were seldom censured,

and then only mildly, not so much because of their crimes, it seemed, but because they had allowed themselves to be caught. Americans who spoke with fervor and indignation for the defence of American rights on sea and land were, he found, on the other hand, excoriated as disturbers of the peace.

The American of other stock than German, of whom we here speak, came to the only conclusion humanly possible under the circumstances. He decided that the German-American was a dangerous fellow and had better be watched.

VII

HERE then we have set down the grievances which Americans of German origin held and in part still hold against the American government and the American people, and against them we have enumerated the causes of the mistrust and ill-feeling which has set at variance with their German-American fellows a large section of Americans of other birth or blood. Some of us on one side, some on another felt keenly and still feel keenly what we conceive to be the injustice, the lack of understanding, the blind partisanship of those on the other side. Some of us may not be able ever quite to forget the bitterness of these three years now past.

But those years *are* past, that period *is* at an end. We have entered upon a new stage with innumerable prob-

lems of its own for both the American of German origin and the American of so-called native stock, to face singly and together. They are grave problems, but they are not the problems of those three years of our inglorious "neutrality." Those are behind us, those are dead, waiting only for us who contended over them once, to bury them, shake hands and proceed together to a contest of infinitely greater import in which we are privileged to fight not against each other but side by side.

No American of whatever origin is worthy of the name who today seeks to cloud the vision of the American people and to hamper the fighting strength of the American government by keeping alive through his silence or his speech the bitternesses and suspicions engendered during those years now happily behind us. The American of German origin who keeps his grievances warm; the American of other origin who, on the evidence of indiscretions committed during a period

when public opinion among all sections of the American people was curiously adrift, holds today his mistrust, —these are equally culpable and deserve equally the sharp condemnation of all Americans whose loyalty is more than a phrase and whose patriotism is more than shouting.

Never in the history of our country which has known civil strife of the bitterest kind, has it been more necessary for the word, "*Come, let us reason together,*" to be spoken by the men of force and ideals on both sides of the unhappy controversy. Certainly our own future domestic peace and happiness, and not impossibly the future peace and stability of the world may depend on the high-spirited unanimity with which we Americans face the task that has been set before us.

In friendliness, in mutual trust, in the common hope of true understanding and co-operation, *Come, let us reason together.*

VIII

THE Americans of German origin have, with exceptions scarcely more numerous or notable than any other element in the American people, if put to it, can exhibit, dutifully supported the United States government. Perhaps the majority of the American people of other stock than German is asking more than it has a right to ask, in hoping that this merely "dutiful" support may, in spite of a natural, sentimental reluctance, as old bitternesses in the course of time evaporate in the solemn consciousness of a common peril, develop into a wholehearted advocacy of America's cause. Perhaps it is asking too much, and yet, to ask it, is only human. To do a service because, and only because, duty demands it, is much; but it is a platitude that service means far more

to the giver of it as well as to the one to whom it is given when there is heart behind it.

There was a German-American once upon a time whose wife was ill. A German cousin, who happened to be visiting America at the time, heard of her illness and called, leaving a bunch of roses.

"This is very kind of you!" cried the German-American appreciatively.

"Oh, no!" protested his cousin. "It was my duty."

Would he have been puzzled if he had seen the dubious and whimsical smile with which the German-American's wife gazed upon the roses?

The majority of the German-Americans are supporting their government from a calm and deliberate sense of duty. They are not supporting it with any enthusiasm. No fair-minded American, of whatever origin he may be, will bear them any ill-will for that, though he may deeply regret the fact.

For the German-Americans—be it

clearly understood—believe, rightly or wrongly, that the government of the United States made a series of tragic mistakes, which in the end led logically to what they conceive as the culminating mistake of all, America's entrance into the World War. Believing this, they are nevertheless obediently and with open hands supporting this Government, lending it and giving it their gold, lending it—and giving it—their sons.

Let no one underrate the significance of this. The German-Americans, whatever they have said or done in the past, whatever they are saying or failing to say in the present, have stood the fundamental test of democratic government.

They have accepted the will of the majority.

Whether or not they shall ultimately go farther than this and support whole-heartedly and with fervor a cause in which today they disbelieve, depends largely on the mental attitude toward them of their fellow-citi-

zens of other than German blood and the ability of these fellow citizens to prove to the German-Americans the justice of their cause, the purity of their motives and the idealism which impels them to dedicate the American nation unselfishly to a crusade for the liberty of the world.

No citizen of the United States, seeing clearly a lofty ideal imperilled, will fly to arms more quickly or more enthusiastically in defence of it than the German-American. It is the part of other Americans, it is the part of the government, to convince him that the ideals which they profess have behind them no national or individual vindictiveness toward men of German blood merely because they are of German blood, no commercial greed, no imperialistic designs, but only a sincere and lofty resolve to fight and sacrifice today for the principles for which their fathers fought and sacrificed before them.

IX

THE German-American, we said, believed that the United States should not have entered the War. On what grounds does he base this belief?

We have already enumerated what the German-American regards as certain sins of omission and commission perpetrated by the national government during the years of our neutrality. If the United States had from the very beginning of the War, he contends, been firm in its dealings with both sets of belligerents, England would have been forced to give up her "illegal" blockade, Germany would consequently never have inaugurated her "retaliatory" submarine campaign, no American lives would have been sacrificed, and we should therefore be at peace today. War might have been avoided, moreover, he declares, even

after permitting England to blockade Germany, if the American government had placed an embargo on arms and ammunition or warned American citizens not to travel on belligerent ships. What the American of other origin regards as merely the firm assertion and defence of American rights toward Germany, the German-American regards as weak-kneed submission to England.

Are the many German-Americans who share this opinion possibly right?

The majority of the American people, and among them a growing number who are of German origin, believe that these German-Americans are mistaken. Months before the proclamation of a blockade or a war zone in the North Sea by England or a greater war zone and submarine campaign by Germany, German leaders had in connection with the invasion of Belgium announced and defended a theory of "military necessity" which was bound sooner or later to lead to conflict with the United States on the highway of

the world. Many German-Americans, moreover, while publicly defending Germany and all its works, admitted in private that her methods in diplomacy and in the conduct of war were not altogether such as to make attractive the prospect of a smashing German victory. They accepted President Wilson's suggestion of "Peace without victory," therefore, not only because they suspected that that was the only peace Germany was ever likely to get, but also, in many cases, because they considered that such a peace would chasten the arrogance of the German *Junker* class.

During the months that followed President Wilson's "Peace without victory" message to the belligerents, the President, his advisers and an increasing number of the American people came gradually to realize two important facts.

One was, that Germany's theory of government, and especially her theory of a "State morality" entirely independent of all standards of individual

morality, was a bar to any possibility of a future association of nations for the purpose of preventing war; and was, furthermore, a constant menace to any and every nation which was not large enough or not armed enough at any instant to defend itself.

The other was, that Germany was winning the war, and undoubtedly would win it unless America threw the weight of her resources in men and money on the side of the Allies.

Evidence for the first fact appeared at that time over the signatures of Zimmermann and von Bernstorff, von Papen and Boy-Ed, and since that time in the cold and murderous *spurlos versenkt* message of Count Luxburg and the numerous reports, only a shade less repellent, of the same willing tool to the same cold-blooded State.

Evidence for the second fact was laid before the American people during the months that intervened between December 20th and April 2nd and was confirmed in May by Balfour and Joffre.

During that anxious period from December to February when Bernstorff went, and from February to April when Congress declared war, President Wilson, doubtlessly with great reluctance, rejected his own suggestion of "peace without victory." A drawn battle between the Allies and their Teutonic opponents, with the United States possibly as guiding spirit of the peace negotiations, was one thing; a German victory was quite another, for there was evidence accumulating that such a victory meant in the near future a war single-handed with a stronger Germany, not on our own shores, perhaps, but in South America in defence of the Monroe Doctrine. President Wilson, therefore, decided that the safety of the United States, in the first place, and in the second, the stability and peace of the world, depended on America's entrance into the war on the side of the Allies.

When on April 2nd he called upon Congress to declare war on Germany

in order that America might help "to make the world safe for democracy," we Americans of German origin opposed him and in part ridiculed him, believing that his lofty phrase was a hypocritical mantle to cover aims that would not bear the blaze of day. In the light of later evidence, however, we must now admit that, in so speaking, the President was in seven memorable words, not only expressing America's international obligation as the greatest of republics, but also, at the same time, laying, as the essential foundation stone of any future association of nations, the principle of democracy on which we German-Americans and Americans of all other breeds unreservedly pin our faith. In one bold, imaginative phrase he not only called upon the American people to uphold for themselves and for all free peoples their ideals of liberty and popular government against a cold-blooded State which considered itself above human standards of conduct and morality; but, by

inevitable inference, also served notice upon the nations at whose side he was about to set the United States, and, no less, upon the despots and *Junkers* among our own people, that the price which the American government demanded for rescuing the Allies of western Europe from the dominance of Germany, and, incidentally, their financial backers in America from bankruptcy, was the extension after the war of democratic rule not only in Germany but in the countries of the Allies and within the United States.

If, as a large number of German-Americans believe, our own *Junkers* of Wall Street forced America into the War, these would-be autocrats of ours have been hoist by their own petard, for their powers and their money are already being taken from them.

If, on the other hand, as a still larger number of German-Americans assert, England forced us into the War, she has in the process cut off her own

nose. For it is becoming increasingly clear that the victory which will end this war in the only way that the free peoples of the world will allow it to end, will be not an English victory, but an American victory. In fact, there is a prospect of grave danger in the possibility that England may realize this too vividly for her own comfort and consent to a patched-up peace, based on German renunciations in the West, before America can make her power overwhelmingly felt.

Has not the time come for every *Gesang Verein* from Maine to California to stand and sing in unison, "*Wer andern eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein?*"—and thereafter to unite in singing with a fervor never felt before, "*My country, 'tis of thee?*"

We begin to think so.

X

THE writer of these pages is one of many German-Americans who believed, until a short time ago, that the phrase "to make the world safe for democracy" was, frankly, hypocritical cant, a kind of glimmering gold dust to throw in the eyes of the crowd. He thought that the United States had gone to war solely on the submarine issue and he did not quite see why, if it was necessary to go to war on that issue in April, 1917, it was not even more pressingly necessary to go to war on it two years earlier, while the horrors of the sinking of the *Lusitania* were still fresh in our hearts. The same objection, for that matter, might be made to the phrase "to make the world safe for democracy" as a basis for our tardy entry into the war. The world was more unsafe for democracy in August

and September 1914 than it has ever been since.

Why then did we not jump into the struggle at that time?

The answer is, that only a small minority of Americans, who seemed to the rest of us at the time the wildest kind of anti-German fanatics, recognized in 1914 the fact which the American people is only now beginning to recognize and which President Wilson expressed in so vivid and memorable a phrase, namely, that on the battlefields of Europe today a highly scientific and brilliantly organized form of autocracy is battling to dominate the far less scientific, far less efficient, far less skilfully organized democracies of the world. Only a very few Americans recognized the real character of the conflict in the first or even the second year of the war. To the great majority it seemed at bottom an economic struggle, a war for trade routes, for commercial dominance, a war in which France, Belgium and Serbia, even Russia and Austria, were

the dupes and pawns of the world's greatest trade rivals, Germany and England.

We might still be believing that, for we are remote from Europe in more senses than one, and we do not credit all which garrulous travellers from those distant parts seek to tell us, for our own good. It was not England or English propaganda; it was not France, it was not Belgium, which told us, after many inventions, the "real truth about the War."

It was Germany.

It was not through any propaganda, moreover, that she told us; not through silver-tongued orators, nor writers of editorials. Germany told us the truth about the war not by the medium of words at all but by her own avowed and defended deeds. She told it to us with terrifying frankness when she sank the *Lusitania,* not in sinking her (which was absolutely permissible under international law and the laws of reasonable self-defence) but in sinking her *without warning* and with-

out making provisions for the rescue of her passengers. She told us in the sinking of the *Arabic*, the *Ancona*, the *Sussex*, in the dynamiting of bridges and munition plants, in the revelations of her diplomatic correspondence. Presenting evidence which no "English propaganda" could ever make half as convincing as she made it herself by the defence of her own statesmen and leaders of opinion, Germany told us, indeed, the truth about the war.

That truth was, that a people who considered themselves "the centre of God's plan for the world" (Pastor W. Lehmann) and believed themselves hated and pursued by other nations (in the words of another of their intellectual leaders, Professor Sombart) only because of their "enormous spiritual superiority" as "the representatives of God on earth," had allowed a system of political morality to develop among their ruling classes which made utterly precarious the existence of any nation which was not

at all times highly organized for defence and which, by reason of its more popular and therefore less centralized form of government, could not, without sacrificing its ideals, be so organized.

It was Germany herself who told us and who proved to us beyond question that the Great War was not merely a conflict between trade rivals, but a war between autocracy, scientific, efficient but conscienceless, on the one hand; and on the other, democracy, blundering, inefficient and in detail corrupt, but in the main progressive and sensitive to the opinions of men.

It was Germany herself who made this clear to us. It was Germany praising (a little too loudly we thought) her own point of view, her own spirit of sacrifice, self-discipline, self-abnegation; it was Germany praising above all things, war and the grandiose conception of the German State as the self-appointed health-officer of the world testing out who, under the laws of biology, was

among the nations fit to survive; it was Germany, showing us by her actions, that she was true to the philosophy she preached, who made us remember our own notions of life and government, and made us as a people see them and feel them as we had not seen them and felt them for half a century.

It was Germany like a schoolmaster drumming into our heads night and day her supreme belief in Force, who made us remember that our faith as a people rested on Justice.

It was Germany, showing us the effects, physical and psychological, within and without, of autocratic, paternal government, which made us decide that democracy was worth preserving even at the cost of all we possessed of treasure and youth.

XI

WE say that this is a war between autocracy and democracy. That is one of those glittering generalities which are always open to suspicion. But, whereas most slogans of the sort are superficially true and fundamentally false, this slogan is at bottom sound and untrue only on the surface.

Germany is assuredly not in form an autocracy, as Russia, before the days of the Duma was an autocracy; that is, an empire ruled by an absolute monarch responsible only to himself and God, and not very responsible to God. William the Second, as King of Prussia, is, theoretically, limited in his control by an Upper House and a House of Representatives; as German Emperor, he is president of a confederation of some twenty-odd

states, whose representatives constitute the *Bundesrat* or Federal Council, which is theoretically an associate House of the *Reichstag*, the popular assembly.

All the machinery of a constitutional and democratic monarchy like England, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Greece, is present in Germany, and it operates smoothly and is a pleasure to the eye. Wherein then does the government of Germany differ so vitally from the government of these other nations, that we presume to call Germany, which is ruled by a monarch, an autocracy, and these other countries, which are likewise ruled by monarchs, to all intents and purposes, democracies?

Is this sheer hypocritical cant? Let us see.

In England, the actual government is under the direction of a Prime Minister appointed ostensibly by the King, but responsible to Parliament and only to Parliament, which can, in the American meaning of the word,

"recall" him at any moment and with no greater effort than it takes to record a parliamentary vote. As soon as the Prime Minister loses his majority in Parliament, he automatically loses his position, which, thereupon, descends on the leader of the Opposition. The King may not desire this change of administration. Personally, he may in fact violently object to it, but his opinion on the matter, though more interesting, is actually no more important in influencing the course of events than the opinion of the postmaster of Ballachulish. The King "regrets" to accept the resignation of Lord So-and-So, and takes pleasure in graciously requesting Mr. Other-and-So to form a new Cabinet; and the government goes on and the majority, somewhat differently constituted, continues to rule. In its essence, that is democracy; for the people, through their representatives in Parliament, at all times have control of those who govern them, with a power which we in America lack,

of changing their government at any moment when their governors cease to represent the views of the majority of the people as represented in the House of Commons.

In Germany, on the other hand, the Prime Minister, or Imperial Chancellor, though appointed also by the monarch, is responsible not to parliament at all, but only to the master who appoints him. Neither the Federal Council nor the *Reichstag* are officially consulted in his selection or have power to veto it. He is set in his place by the arbitrary will and whim of the sovereign, subject only to the sovereign's political sagacity and respect for public opinion, and he holds his place as long and only as long as his master is satisfied with his work. The *Reichstag* may rail and tear its hair; it makes no difference. The Emperor appoints him and only the Emperor can remove him.

The *Reichstag*, furthermore, is impotent, not only in the appointment and removal of the Chancellor, but

also largely in the matter of legislation. Most legislation originates in the Federal Council which represents solely the rulers of the twenty-six federated states; but whether it originates there or in the *Reichstag*, all legislation is subject to this Council's consent. This Council, moreover, is not merely a body of aristocrats like the House of Lords (many of whom, incidentally, were commoners yesterday with a commoner's point of view); its members ostensibly represent the governments of the federated states, but, being not elective but appointive, they are to all intents and purposes the representatives not of the peoples of the states from which they come but of certain kings, dukes and princes almost all of whom are either members of the House of Hohenzollern or connected with it by marriage. The Grand Duke of Baden, for instance, is the Emperor's first cousin; the Duke of Brunswick is his son-in-law; the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen the husband of one of his

sisters; the Prince of Schaumburg-Lippe the nephew of another; the Prince of Hesse is the brother-in-law of his brother; the Grand Duke of Oldenburg the father-in-law of one of his sons, the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin the brother-in-law of another; and so forth and so on. It is quite a family affair. All of these dukes, princes, and princesses hold actual or honorary commissions under him, as Commander-in-Chief of the Prussian army. The security of all of them, moreover, depends on his security. Each petty court is a centre of reaction bent on preserving at all costs the pomp and privileges of prince and aristocracy. To them the Emperor is not merely the president of the federated states, but the arch-defender of that obstinate conservatism in politics and religion to which they owe the ease and tinsel of their lives.

The *Bundesrat*, representing these courts, controls the *Reichstag*, inasmuch as it has the power to

nullify its actions; it is in turn controlled by the House of Hohenzollern which is under the absolute and unquestioned dominance of the Emperor. The Emperor is supported by the Prussian army, the imperial navy and by thousands of Prussian and imperial administrative or judicial office-holders, professors and school teachers who hold their positions at his pleasure. The Emperor who, quite apart from family influence, as King of Prussia controls seventeen out of the Council's sixty-one votes, can declare offensive war with the consent of the Federal Council, without consulting the *Reichstag;* he may declare what he in his own unsupported judgment may consider defensive war, as in 1914, without the consent of either body. In the waging of war, the *Reichstag* enters only as that branch of the government which votes the necessary credits; and even here it has power only to annoy, not to control the executive. The Emperor can make peace and conclude other trea-

ties without consulting either *Reichstag* or *Bundesrat*. In foreign affairs there is no check whatever on his actions. Conditions in Germany are therefore exactly the reverse of what they are in England. For in Germany it is not the monarch but the *Reichstag* which is the decoration, playing to some extent the amiable part which the King plays in England—its views, that is, are always highly interesting, but in a pinch, of no influence whatever in the actual conduct of affairs. The *Reichstag* is in many instances, as an editorial in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* pointed out as recently as January first of this year, "a mere debating club," wildly waving its arms while the Federal Council with the Chancellor at its head, and ultimately the Emperor himself, supported by the Great General Staff, make the decisions against which the people have no appeal.

Efficient though it may be, benevolent though it may be, surely this is autocracy.

The German government is a government by experts. From the Emperor, trained from childhood for his place, down to the youngest *Referendar,* or judge's secretary, and including governors of provinces and districts, diplomats, consuls, mayors, judges, police superintendents, health officers, all are experts, each in his own field. The result is marvellous efficiency, but it is efficiency bought at the price of that liberty, equality, fraternity, which we Americans cherish as the fundamental blessings of democracy.

For suffrage in Germany and especially in Prussia, the dominant state in the Empire, is based on property, so that a single rich man may and does, here and there, hold in himself one-third the voting power of a district; and the four percent of the rich and the fourteen percent of the well-to-do have as much representation in the Prussian *Landtag* as the eighty-two percent of the poor. The election of *Reichstag* deputies is not thus circum-

scribed, but the distribution of electoral districts which, on a basis laid down in 1871 and never corrected, gives the countryside, where the Junkers are strong, one delegate to 24,000, and the city districts of the Socialists one delegate to 125,000, works to the same end, inequality.

The German system, indeed, is based on the denial of equality. To the mind of the German State, there are two hereditary classes, the governors and the governed, separated by the twin bars of social caste and the possession of wealth. A man is born to be a governor or he is born to be governed. There is, in a sense, no escaping either fate, for the son of a count must be feeble-minded, indeed, who cannot secure a commission in a crack regiment; and the son of a laborer can no more hope to rise to a position in the higher government service than he can hope to become a lieutenant in the Prussian Guards. Social distinctions are sharp and absolute and rest in family *plus* wealth.

In the government service, itself, the administrative branch is open only to men of family who have a certain amount of money with which to entertain in a fashion worthy of the prestige of a Prussian official. The judicial branch holds, socially, a distinctly inferior position.

There was once upon a time (and this is a true story) a certain rich and ambitious lady with a marriageable daughter. A young Prussian official of her own social caste wooed her daughter and won her.

"I like him so much," she said of her prospective son-in-law. "And isn't it just splendid that he is in the administrative and not the judicial branch? Because naturally if he were in the judicial branch I could not give him my daughter."

The whole educational system is organized, financed and controlled in a manner unmistakably intended to make ever wider the gap between the sons of the small governing class and the sons of the class, eight or ten

times as great, which is governed. The sons of the nobility, the aristocracy, the upper middle class and a very few of the lower middle class who have money, go to the *Gymnasia,* the *Kadettenschulen* and similar institutions, and to the education of this tenth of the nation's youth, the Prussian government devotes nearly one quarter of its total educational appropriation. On the child in the *Volkschule* (which corresponds to the American public school), the government expends 65 marks annually (a matter of sixteen dollars at the normal rate of exchange). On the child in the middle schools, it expends 112 marks; on the child in the higher schools, 248 marks. The average size of a class in the *Volkschule* is 55 pupils per teacher. In the United States, 40 has been found too great a number for efficient instruction and the average over this country is 33.

"Many of the most illustrious teachers of Germany," writes Winthrop Talbot in a recent article in the

Century, prefaced and endorsed by Professor John Dewey, "have maintained, observant of imperial expressions and policies, that the state is best subserved by keeping the bulk of the people in a stunted state of mental starvation for unthinking toil and that the work of the world cannot be done without a large degree of existing near-illiteracy; and for this reason they have opposed strenuously the policy of generous public expenditure for popular education."

Wherefore, the machinery of government continues to run smoothly, unhampered by the rude injection of wrenches thrown by an awakening populace; and still, as Prince Max of Baden bitterly cried in the upper chamber of that state recently, "The majority of Germans indolently accept the authorities without any desire on their part to share in responsibility for the welfare of the Fatherland."

No liberty to rise, no equality in education or the conduct of government, no fraternity whatsoever be-

tween the governing classes and the classes governed—what fools Germany's silver-tongued defenders have sought to make of us when they declared that Germany was as democratic a nation as ours! They thought we did not know anything about Germany. And they were right.

But we are learning.

"Germany has changed during these years of war," her friends declare. "The war has been a great leveller. Class distinctions have vanished."

Let us see.

From the heart of Germany itself comes the illuminating word. "Truly, there is need these days of the intelligence not only of the middle class but of the proletariat," writes a prominent German scientist satirically. "But what are you going to do, when peace comes, with a man 'who himself admits that his father was a stone-mason's assistant'? Since the subalterns who are doing commissioned officers' duty, popular as they are, do not of themselves have adequate authority, the

government has created the temporary makeshift of *subaltern-lieutenants to be considered equals at officers' mess only at the fighting front.*"

So much for Germany's democracy.

This is not the place to ask the question whether Germany's conception of government by experts may not, after all, be the right conception; and ours may not, for all our boasts, be wrong. For truly, Germany is well-governed, benevolently, efficiently and, as far as dollar-corruption goes, honestly governed. Its poor and sick are cared for, its laborers and its agéd are protected. And our democratic government is inefficient, corrupt, incorrigibly short-sighted, and always wasteful, beyond imagining, of money and of time.

And yet—

It is not cant to say that in America all have an equal chance to rise, through education free and equal for all, from the lowest to the highest place. It is not cant to say that the

classes of governors and governed in this country are made up not of those to whom, on the one hand, opportunity is given, and, on the other hand, those from whom opportunity is consciously withheld; but of those, rich and poor, who take the opportunity held out equally to all, and those who refuse to take it. It is not cant to say that the vote of the poor man is as powerful as the vote of the rich.

It is the simple truth, and it means that, with all our countless faults and stupidities and petty and great corruptions, our feet are set on the road to that ideal whose motto is: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

XII

HERE we Americans of German blood stand, confronting, on the one hand, the country of our origin, highly organized and admirable to the eye, yet materialistic and (if we may believe her own Bernstorffs and Luxburgs) coldly corrupt at heart; and, on the other, the country of our adoption, so childish, so optimistic, so money-grubbing and yet at bottom so idealistic, somehow so grand!

We stand between two masters. We cannot serve them both, not even in the undisturbed silence of our own hearts. For the ideal which Germany represents is so utterly removed from the ideal which America is, in her blundering way, seeking after, that no one who cleaves to the one can for an instant hold to the other.

Here no neutrality is possible.

Do we believe in paternal government by experts, with the inequality and the concentration of power in a few possibly efficient but irresponsible hands, that inevitably go with such a form of government?

Or—

Do we believe in democratic government which, with all its sins and shortcomings on its head, does make for equality and does call upon each individual rich and poor, to develop, for his own good and for the good of all, whatever talents he may possess?

We men and women of German blood must understand clearly the issues that are involved and, facing them, must take our choice. For it is not only that America, counting heads and hearts, must know *unmistakably* who is heart and soul for her, and who is for her only as a matter of convenience while in the depths of his being he holds to the principles of the enemy. It is rather this—that America in this great crisis needs on her side the passionate idealism of

that old German spirit which has been educated out of the German citizen of today and survives in its old force only here where it has found the free and congenial air denied it among the hills and woods of its birth.

The forefathers of many of us were Forty-eighters. They rebelled in Prussia, in Saxony, in Hanover, in Bavaria, Baden, Würtenberg, Austria, Hungary, against an autocratic form of government which, in the seventy years which have since elapsed, has grown powerful beyond the fears even of those who in 1848 gave their lives to overthrow it. Those fathers and grandfathers of ours failed, beaten down even in cities not under Prussian rule, by Prussian troops. Not the autocracy, but *they* were crushed. They fled, some from prison with the death penalty on their heads, to England, where the poets Kinkel and Freiligrath among others, found sympathetic refuge; the majority to America.

What these magnificent revolution-

ists stood for and accomplished over here is history, and the greatest of them, Carl Schurz, will always remain one of the noblest, as he was one of the most striking and picturesque, political figures of his time.

Confronted with the choice between autocracy and democracy, those men, in the bitter conflicts of 1848 and 1849, chose rather to shed the blood of their own fellow-citizens, as Americans in 1776 had chosen rather to shed the blood of their own kin, than to leave undefended against the forces of reaction the principles of popular government in which they believed.

It is no new problem that we are asked to face. It is in a sense not even a new war in which we are asked to take sides. It is for us the continuation of the war begun by our fathers for the democratization of the governments of the world. It is for us the opportunity to carry to fulfilment their holiest dreams.

And not only *their* dreams, not only the dreams of those brave men long

dead; but the dreams of the noble minds of Germany today which, amid the orgy of materialism, have been able to keep the lights of the spirit burning. As the German dreamers of the past looked to America for inspiration, so the dreamers of today look to her to lead the world toward a new and wider conception of patriotism than the patriotism to a dynasty or a single narrow, jealous, self-conscious State.

A German professor of physiology at the University of Berlin, Dr. Nicolay, dared to express his dream of such a wider patriotism, and was imprisoned in the fortress of Graudenz for his presumption. "That new patriotism is already a living thing beyond the water," he cries. "Over there it could come to birth because there the dynastic patriotism of the past has become transformed into a true patriotism to an ideal. The new Europe has already been born, not indeed in Europe, but over there where there are no ruined castles and no mediaeval junk and tomfoolery. The new Europe has

been born. Let it be the care of us Europeans who remain that it become a living thing on our old soil likewise, in order that civilization be not lost to us for ever in favor of America."

It is thus that a German professor at Germany's greatest university sees the contrast between the country of our fathers and the country of which we today are citizens. Not Germany, he declares, but America is the torch-bearer of civilization, because here has already transpired what must transpire in Europe during the coming generations if European civilization is to endure—the breaking down of barriers of race and language and origin, the wholesale burial of hatchets in the clear light of a great ideal of liberty shared by all alike.

The German dreamer in prison sees in the working of the American melting-pot the hope of enduring peace for Europe; even as the German laborer, rioting in the streets of Breslau or Berlin, sees in the equality of education and franchise, which the Ameri-

can enjoys, the hope of economic independence, and a greater opportunity for his children.

If the dreamer in Germany is willing to go to prison for the sake of preaching American ideals, and the laborer in Germany is willing to fling himself against the bayonets of the police for them, can we Americans of German blood, who live and prosper under a government based on those ideals, do less than give that government our open, ungrudging and enthusiastic declaration of support?

XIII

WHERE do you stand?

Where *can* we, Americans of German origin, with our Mühlenberg and Herkimer, who fought for liberty in the American Revolution, with our Sigel, Blenker, Hecker, Osterhaus, Carl Schurz and their comrades who fought for liberty first in Germany, and, failing there, fought for liberty under the banner of Abraham Lincoln, where *can* we stand, in justice to our high tradition, except heart and soul with those who today fight for liberty against the identical system and the identical dynasty against which our fathers fought two generations ago?

Not only loyalty to the government to which we owe allegiance, but loyalty to the spirit and the high traditions of our German revolutionary

heroes, demand that today we stand unmistakably with and for America.

Surely, the great majority of Americans of German origin do so stand.

Why then do they still refuse frankly and freely to admit it? Why do they still permit the shadow of past misunderstandings to loom between them and the rest of the American people? Why do they still permit any one to fear that they stand for and behind Germany?

Their reluctance is perhaps somewhat a matter of pride, somewhat a matter of resentment; but most of all it is a matter of sentiment.

We German-Americans are, many of us, prisoners of an illusion, tied hand and foot by sentimentalities. Only a number altogether negligible would ever want to take up arms for Germany. The majority are fully conscious that they belong to America, that their future and the future of their children lie here. But sentiments tie our hands behind our backs;

and they are not even valid sentiments. The Germany to which our hearts now turn in sympathy is not the Germany we actually know—hard, materialistic and brutally bent on achieving, preserving and exercising power—but a tender land of green valleys and sleepy towns, of castle ruins and cosy taverns in their shadow—(ah, to the writer of these pages, too, there is magic in those dear names, Drachenfels, Rüdesheim, Assmannshausen, Lahneck, Rolandseck, Schloss Hardenberg, Plesse, Gleichen, Hanstein, Yburg!)—of singing and fiddle playing and dancing in the woods and coffee parties and hilarious excursions and summer walking-trips along the Rhine and through the Black Forest, and in it and through it all, the "Trompeter von Säkkingen" school of sentimental romance and the gay tenderness of Eichendorff's "Taugenichts." It is to this picture-book Germany that our minds return. Instead of contrasting German actuality with American actuality, we contrast

this dream-Germany with workaday America; and against so rosy a dream, America, however hospitable, however helpful, seems alien and unkind; and liberty, equality and the possibility of fraternity are altogether forgotten.

We German-Americans are fettered with illusions. "Germany gave us so much," we say. "How can we turn against her?" When we say that we forget that, once upon a time, we or our fathers somewhere in Germany weighed thoughtfully the benefits of German life and the probable benefits of American life, weighed the *Gemütlichkeit,* the charm, the consciousness of "being home" among friends, against the greater freedom, the greater opportunity that the distant shore seemed to promise; and chose to leave the old home and seek the distant shore. What America offered seemed then of greater value than what Germany offered. Our fathers came to America and were evidently not disappointed, for they remained. They recognized that what America

gave was to them of greater value than what Germany could give them. "Germany gave us so much. How can we turn against her?" Our fathers turned against her years ago for reasons which then seemed just. They wanted the benefits which life in America promised. They secured them and enjoyed them; and we, their sons, in *our* time are enjoying them. Now like a child that has paid a nickel for a toy, we are crying because the salesman will not let us have the toy and the nickel also.

We German-Americans are prisoners of an illusion. "Germany gave us so much," we say. True, Germany did give us much. Germany gave us charming customs, such as birthday and Christmas celebrations; Germany gave us a love for poetry, for music; she gave us a keen sense of duty, of self-discipline, of integrity in business, of family loyalty. But the qualities of character which she gave are not exclusively German qualities. There are cannibals in the interior of

South America who would rather die than break a promise. The other gifts, moreover, especially the gift of a beautiful language and a beautiful literature—what have we done with those?

"Germany gave us so much."

When we say that, we speak of the language, the poetry. And here again we are deceiving ourselves, we are sentimentalizing. For how have we German-Americans actually cherished the German language in the generations during which we were allowed to cultivate it without opposition? Did we cling to it because we loved it for its own sake and the sake of the Fatherland? A few among the educated have actually clung to it and held it high for reasons of sentiment. The majority, however, used it because at first it was easier to speak German than to learn English. After a while they found it was easier to use here and there an English word or American localism heard a hundred times a day, than to bother to find

its exact German equivalent. Then, soon, they were talking the bastard lingo in which the classic example, "die cow iss eeber die fence gechumpt and hat die kebbedges gedämäged, only slightly exaggerates the awful corruption of both tongues. Surely, people who allow themselves or their children to talk a hodge-podge of that sort cannot be said to be cherishing the spiritual heritage of the Fatherland.

We German-Americans have not cherished it. We are merely trying to fool ourselves into believing that we have cherished it or still cherish it. The object of the various associations of German-Americans was ostensibly to keep fresh the memory of the German language and culture. What they actually did keep fresh were certain German customs and a somewhat maudlin homesickness for a dream-Germany. They encouraged the pretence that German-Americans were exiles, and frequently on festive occasions we have pleasantly recalled our

hard lot and pleasantly forgotten it the morning after and gone about our business.

Germans are naturally sentimental. They are never so happy as when they are sad, and it is notorious that when they are having the gayest time, they sing

"Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten
Dass ich so traurig bin."

It is natural-born sentimentality which has tied the German-American to a Fatherland which he left for excellent reasons and to which he has given no practical attention since. Like all sentimentalists, he wants to have his cake and eat it, too; he forswears his allegiance to Germany because he wants to enjoy American equality of opportunity for himself and for his children, and at the same time he persuades himself that he is still *ein guter braver Deutscher*. America is his wife, but he keeps Germany as his soul-mate, and is puzzled and offended when his wife

boxes his ears, and hales him into court and asks,

"Heinrich, where do you stand?"

Sentimentality has kept the German-American the man-without-a-country that today he appears to the majority of his fellow-citizens to be. America should have been more observant. She should have seen that we German-Americans needed some friendly attention. America did not see, but Germany did. Germany—far-sighted, keen for openings—played on the German-American's sentimentality in every way she knew. She sent silver-tongued orators to thrill us; she sent ponderous professors to give our banquet-dreams a pseudo-intellectual basis; she sent secret agents; she sent organizers. She hinted strongly that there was an Order of the Red Eagle or an Order of the Crown waiting for the German-American who loyally served Germany's cause; she whispered in the ears of editors dark secrets concerning anti-German persecutions, Anglo-Saxon

presumption and similar "nativist" hobgoblins.

It was a long skilful cast; the imitation butterfly beautifully concealed the hook; and we German-Americans *bit.*

Indeed, the German-American is the victim of an illusion. He has allowed himself to believe, and he has been cruelly led to believe that he was a most particular kind of fish, at home in two elements, the water and the air. He has been led to think that he is exempt from that law, which is not only biblical, that no man can serve two masters. He has been told that he *must* serve two masters.

An illusion has tied the German-American hand and foot. That illusion is the sentimental idea that there is such a thing as loyalty of the emotions separate and apart from loyalty of the hands, a loyalty which may safely be given to Germany without disturbing in any degree the loyalty of the hands which is due the United States.

That notion is false and pernicious! The German language itself has the only adequate word for it. It is *Bloedsinn.*

No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

No American of German blood can in this crisis cleave with his heart to Germany and be anything but disloyal to the United States.

XIV

WE are men of flesh and bone, but we are, first of all and above all, beings of spirit and fire who give their allegiance not as body and blood dictate but as the discriminating mind commands. Germany is indeed the parent of our bodies, but America is the father and guardian of our liberated spirits. America, who gives to each one of us the patient teaching he is wise enough to ask for and accept; who reaches down to us of herself no benefits, but allows one and all equally to strive for and achieve, each according to his power, the blessings of life as he sees them; who gives us no government but that which we ourselves make for ourselves—chaos, if we so wish, order if we so desire; who sets no limit to the possibilities of our lives save the limits of

nature and our own wisdom and will!

Americans of German blood, our place is here! Here is the home to which henceforth body and mind, spirit and heart belong! This is the air in which, as nowhere else, that which is highest in us can breathe and live!

A German poet, Gottfried Keller, who truly loved German woods and hills, wrote many years ago of that love of the homeland which under circumstances becomes a fetter and makes men "who should have put behind them childish things, trifle with puerile toys," made ridiculous by the crafty tyranny of sentiment.

"Hier trenne sich der lang vereinte Strom!
Versiegend schwinde der im alten Staube,
Der andere breche sich ein neues Bette!
Denn *einen* Pontifex nur fasst der Dom,
Das ist die Freiheit, der polit'sche Glaube,
Der löst und bindet jede Seelenkette!"

Here is our home. Indeed, we have no other home. If in our momentary passion and under the influence of an illusion, we stand aside now, saying

to the rest of the American people, "We will do our duty. We will help you with our hands and our treasure, but remember our hearts are not with you"; if we say that, we are lost; we will be homeless wanderers on the face of the earth.

For Germany will give us no refuge. In Germany today no one is hated and despised as we German-Americans. For Germany is saying, "These folk who call themselves Germans and call themselves Americans have proved themselves neither one nor the other. They have neither helped the country of their origin nor the country of their adoption. In a war such as this, they have been content to be neither hot nor cold. God have pity on their souls! We will not."

The German Emperor himself years ago spoke the final word concerning divided allegiance: "German-Americans? I recognize no German-Americans. I recognize only Germans or Americans."

This is a grave hour for us Ameri-

cans of German blood. Shall we, in future, be jeered and shunned as renegades both in Germany and in America? Shall it be said of us, the world over, that, faced by the greatest issue of modern times, we were so tied to dreams and resentments that we were unable firmly and unmistakably to range ourselves with those who were fighting for the ideals for which our fathers fought and suffered? Shall this be said of us?

The time has come to forget grievances. Some among us Americans of German blood believe that, in the heat of bitter controversies, they have been wronged. But we ourselves have not all been guiltless. For the sake of a great ideal in peril, but if not for that, then for the sake of our own future peace and happiness and the peace and happiness of our children, it is deeply urgent that we should put the past behind us and associate ourselves whole-heartedly with this America which is indeed as much our America as it is the America of the men and

women whose fathers fought at Lexington.

The time has, indeed, come to forget grievances and to forget other things beside grievances. The time has come not only for Fritz and Heinrich to put behind them sentimental memories, but for their more prosperous brethren to forget those "German interests" which in the time of national peril, they are still seeking to conserve. For many Americans of German blood are still straddling, anxious to serve America as much as personal safety demands, but eager not to do anything that will make it impossible for them, after the war, to renew those profitable "German connections" which, in former days, helped them to bread and butter and jam.

This is not a safe time for neutrals or straddlers or for men who indignantly assert their complete Americanism even while they keep one eye cocked to Germany's trade after the war.

It is a safe time only for men capable of heroic decisions.

The choice we are asked to make is a hard choice. It is a choice that the English colonists made when they fought their mother country. It is a choice that many men both South and North made during the Civil War against their own fathers and brothers. It is a choice which the German Revolutionists of 1848 made when they fought against fellow Germans who denied them the institutions of free men. In 1776 in America, in 1848 in Germany, the principle of personal liberty was involved, and men who loved liberty chose to fight their own flesh and blood rather than sacrifice a principle which they knew was fundamental. They made the difficult choice and we honor them today as heroes.

Who remembers the men who ruled Prussia in 1848? But all the world remembers the men who defied Prussia—Kinkel, Schurz, Herwegh, Freiligrath.

Hear once more the words of Dr. Nicolay crying across the sea to us from the prison where Prussia has confined him—this valiant spirit who of all Germany's intellectual leaders has been almost the only one to retain the ability to think for himself and the courage to speak what he thinks.

"Once upon a time, men loved an ideal," he says; "or, if a man was without an ideal, he loved certain material advantages, and when a man believed that he could realize this ideal or these material benefits in or by means of the country where he dwelt and where he had been born, he loved that country as the bearer of that ideal, fought for that country, sacrificed himself for that country. But when that country of his failed to satisfy that ideal, he cast it from him, stood sadly apart (for no one finds it pleasant to stand alone) or even fought against his country.

"It is just the noblest men and women in history who have so acted."

Our fathers are among those "no-

blest" folk. With deep pride we remember it.

They had a high ideal and fought their own rulers to attain it. They failed and left their home-land, to pursue in the New World that ideal of liberty that could find no breathing-space in the Old.

Today, for the same great ideal, we their descendants are asked to make a choice similar to the choice they made before us. Have we the vision, have we the moral courage to make it? Shall our children walk with heads high henceforth? Or shall they walk, lonely, unhappy, sullen, rebellious, with bowed heads and averted faces, hated by Germany, scorned and distrusted by America?

On us depends their fate.

America is at war with Germany. Soon American armies will be clashing with German armies. Our lists of dead and wounded will then contain not ten or twenty names but twenty hundred and twenty thousand. It is then that the bitterness and agony

of war will bite into the hearts of the American people. It is then that America will begin to hate, as Germany began to hate after the Marne, and England began to hate after Ypres and Neuve Chapelle. It is then that anti-German hysteria will sweep over this country until every man with German blood in his veins and a German name and German words on his lips will become Anathema to the stricken mothers and fathers of fallen sons; *unless*—

Unless we, Americans of German origin, stand forth now, individually and collectively, openly and absolutely, *for* America and *against* Germany; in no way denying our blood, in no way denying the heritage of our fathers; but, rather, asserting them, crying, "America, look on us! Much have we received, much is required of us. Behold, assuredly it shall be said of us that we who received freely, when the need came, freely give!"

If we stand forth thus, unmistak-

ably, there will run a cheer from one end of this country to the other that will shake thrones, and hearten lovers of liberty and democracy in every trench and camp not only among the armies of America and the Allies, but among the armies of Germany herself. There will be no anti-German hysteria then, no persecution of men with German names. For America and then the world will see at last clearly that this is not a war of many nations against the Teuton race, but a war of men of every race who love liberty and justice against a System which stands on despotism and force.

We have the opportunity to make America and the rest of the world, now, even while they smite German autocracy, to respect and even love men of German blood; we have the opportunity, after the War, to work as no one else can work for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation.

We have that opportunity if we take our stand firmly, squarely, unmistakably *now* for America and her cause.

If we do not take our stand thus, if we continue to appear neutral, to give not our hearts but only the work of our hands to America's battle—nothing that we can say or do in the future will check the wave of feeling against all men and all things of German name or origin, that is bound to rise when the War begins actually to strike the American people in its tenderest spot, the home. If we do not speak today without equivocation nothing we say tomorrow will be worth the breath it takes to utter it.

For even though peace should come today or in a month as many a German-American is rashly confident it will come, the problem for the American of German blood will not be solved thereby. The responsibilities of his position will be increased as the restrictions incident to a state of war are removed from his speech and action. Once more hotheads and irresponsibles may rise up here, there and everywhere preaching the glories of Germanism. Once more Congressmen

from German-American districts may dare to cry, "We must forget party and without regard for previous affiliations vote only for those men who are the friends of Germanism."

Woe to the Americans of German origin then if they have not made their position so clear that no rash and unauthorized spokesman can persuade other Americans to believe that he is actually representative. If, after the war, the apostles of divided allegiance dare to raise their voices again believing that there are German-Americans who will give them support, and the American people are led to believe that the patriotism of the German-Americans during the War has been the patriotism not of conviction but only of convenience, the fury of their fellow-citizens will be without measure and without restraint.

We Americans of German origin stand at the cross-roads. If we step forth now, without hesitation and without reserve for America and her cause, we will be regarded henceforth as

Americans and nothing but Americans, loved and respected more possibly than any other element in our population, because we have been put to the greatest test of all and have proved faithful to the Republic; if we do not so stand forth, on the other hand, we will be dug out of the body politic as a worm is dug out of an apple, and there will be mutual bitterness and dissension for generations.

Let us consider, let us consider this!

I, who have presumptuously taken it on myself to address to you these words, my fellow-Americans of German blood, I am nothing to you, not even a name. I do not appeal to you thus because I imagine that I have any position or any influence which would give my words weight. I have no such position or influence. There are thousands of Americans of German blood more widely known and more influential than I.

I appeal to you only because I am

one of you. I have been torn as you are torn. I love German men and women and German forests and hills and songs as you love them; I too have a father in Germany, I too had a German mother; and I, too, have brothers fighting in Germany's armies. For a time my reason as well as my heart was with Germany's cause, and even after my reason would no longer let me hope for Germany's triumph, for a time my heart was still rebelliously thrilled at the news of a German victory.

So, perhaps, I have a right to speak. I have stood on Germany's side, I have walked in the valley of the shadow of neutrality, I have stood and I now stand irrevocably with the cause of the Allies which, thank God, is now the cause of America.

And I say to you most solemnly, the time has come for us all who are of German origin to stand forth and, individually and collectively, publicly declare ourselves:

"I, an American citizen of German

blood, believe in America, my country, and the principles of liberty, equality and democracy for which she stands. Therefore, and inevitably, I am against Germany. I wish to see my country victorious and Germany defeated. To the fulfilment of this wish I pledge my hands, my heart and my spirit."

In the taking and the keeping of that oath or its equivalent lies the hope, lies the only hope of the happiness and the present and future usefulness of Americans of German blood.

THE END

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